Best Practice and Emerging Principles in Community Indicators

Australian Community Indicators Network Teleconference

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SFU

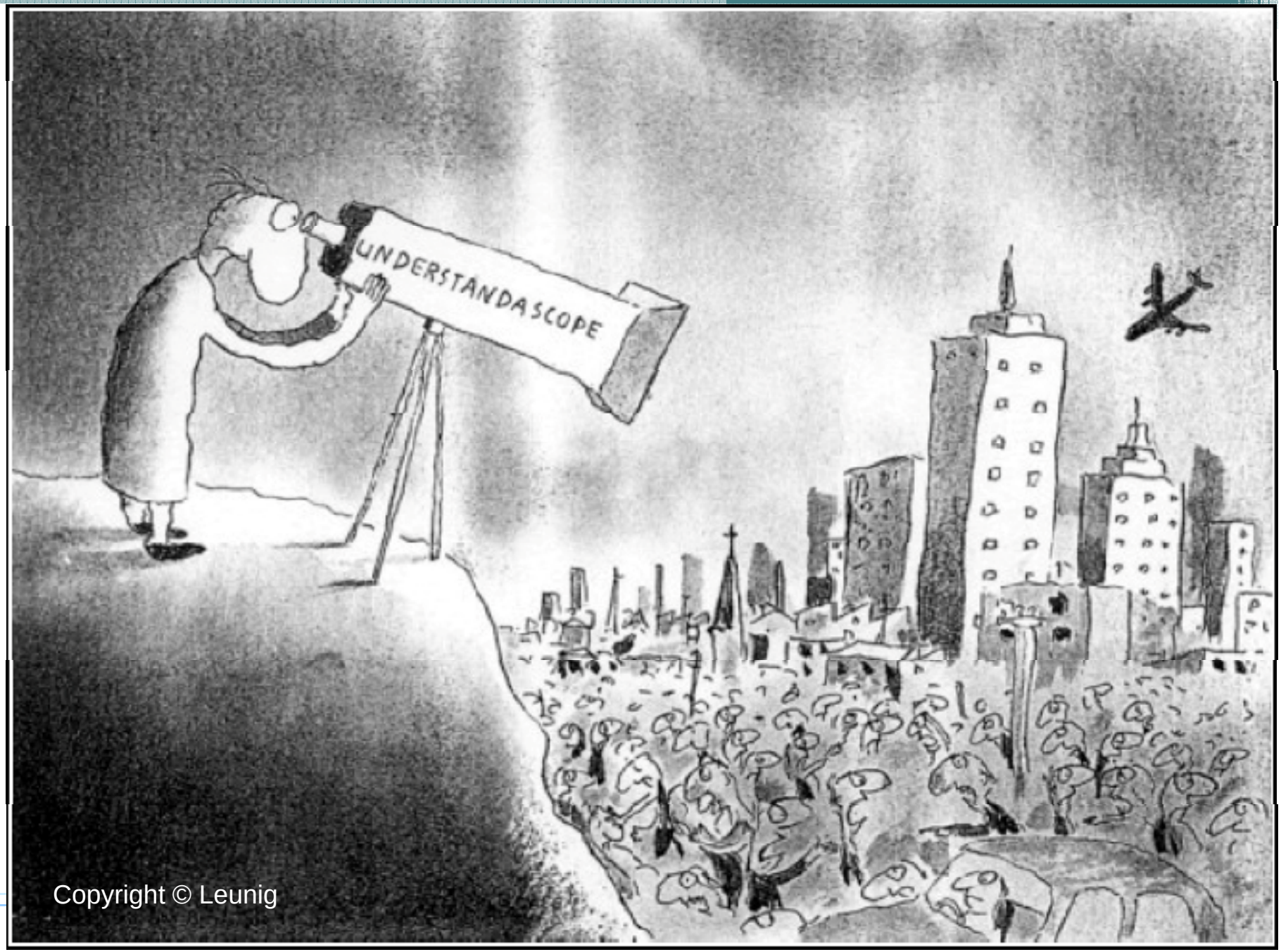
URBANSTUDIES
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

REGIONAL VANCOUVER
URBAN OBSERVATORY

Presentation Outline

1. The global community indicators movement
2. EG: Vital Signs for Metro Vancouver
3. EG: Monitoring growth in Metro Vancouver
4. EG: Gauging the Impact of the Olympic Games
5. Lessons and warnings for the future of community indicators work

Global Indicators Movement



Indicator: a piece of information, selected with the intent to be objective, that helps regular people understand whether things that matter to us are getting better or worse

- A global movement representing many different interests
- Focus on higher order goal: sustainability, quality of life
- Community-based
- Links to accounting, results-oriented management and performance measurement professions

Why do we need “indicators”?

- GDP Fetishism (Stiglitz, Sen, Sarkozy)
- “What gets measured, gets done”
- Shining an action-oriented light on rising challenges to sustainability: climate change, financial crises, affordability ...
- Meeting citizen expectations for engagement and quality of life
- Inter-urban and regional competition

Trade-offs are involved with standardizing indicator systems.

"Better information for better cities"
(UN Habitat Global Urban Observatory)

- or –

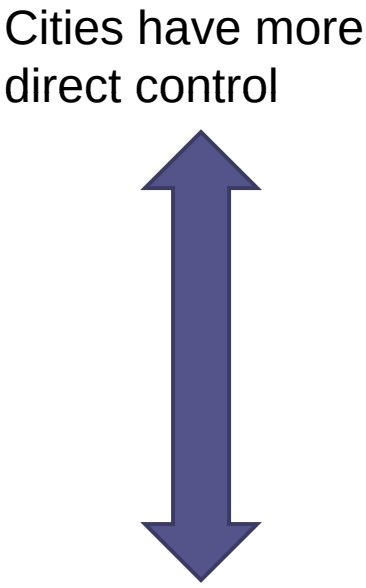
"Measures to match our values"
(Regional Vancouver Urban Observatory)

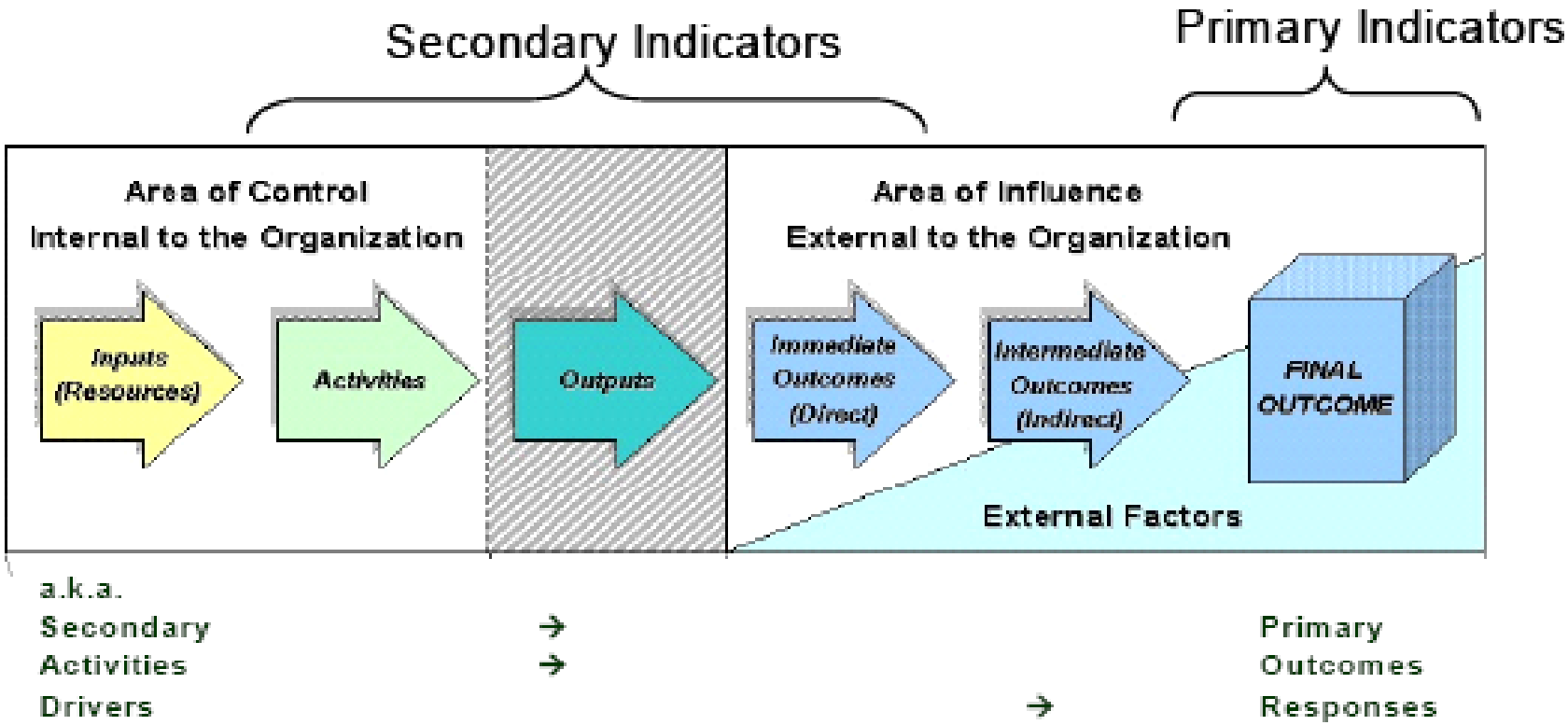
- or -

"Measuring the progress of societies"
(OECD World Project)

Urban indicator systems are needed to serve two separate functions:

- Policy, plan and project management (the "results-based accountability" promise?)
- Change management (the democratic promise?)





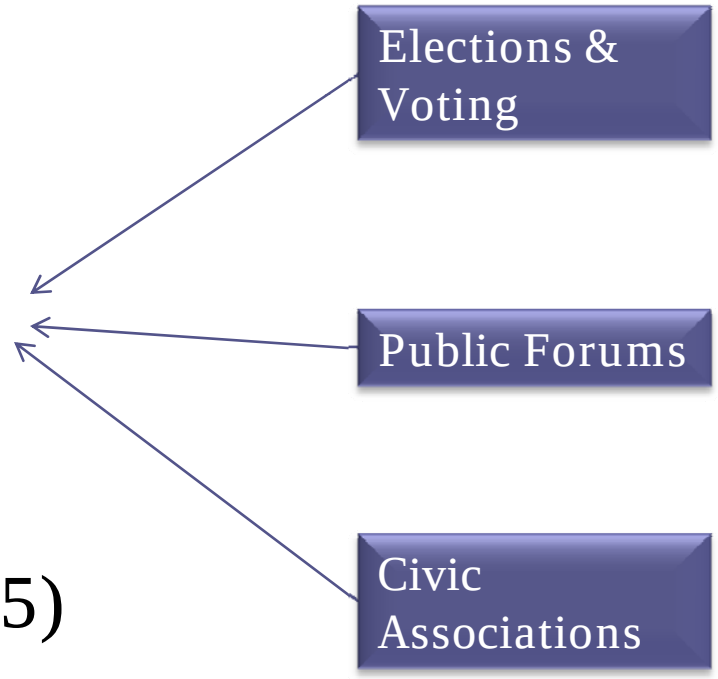
From Sheltair, 2008, CEEI Secondary Indicators for Community Inventory Interpretation. Vancouver.

Indicators within a Process of Governance

Good urban governance =

- Effectiveness
- Equity
- **Participation**
- Accountability
- Security

(UN Habitat, 2005)



What makes community indicator systems effective?

They are applied:

- within a structured framework;
- to proposed new initiatives at all levels of decision-making;
- to existing practices across all sectors;
- to the prevailing policy and legislative paradigm;
- to any decision with the potential to impact patterns of production and consumption, governance and settlement;
- by all sectors of society.

Experiences in Vancouver

Economist Intelligence Unit, Most Liveable City Rankings 2011

Country	City	Rank	Score (100=ideal)
Canada	Vancouver	1	98
Australia	Melbourne	2	97.5
Austria	Vienna	3	97.4
Canada	Toronto	4	97.2
Canada	Calgary	5	96.6
Finland	Helsinki	6	96.2
Australia	Sydney	7	96.1
Australia	Perth	8	95.9
Australia	Adelaide	8	95.9
New Zealand	Auckland	10	95.7

Liveability	Sustainability
Improving life conditions, life chances, or other factors within narrowly defined geographic boundaries	Improving conditions within the boundaries of the city such that conditions beyond those boundaries are not negatively affected
Improving conditions today or within the current political timeframe	Improving conditions within today's temporal frame such that future generations have equal or greater opportunities for their own lives
Improving conditions by reducing the negative impacts of development on the city	Improving conditions by using all byproducts of development and thinking of development as a "closed loop" cycle

VANCOUVER FOUNDATION'S

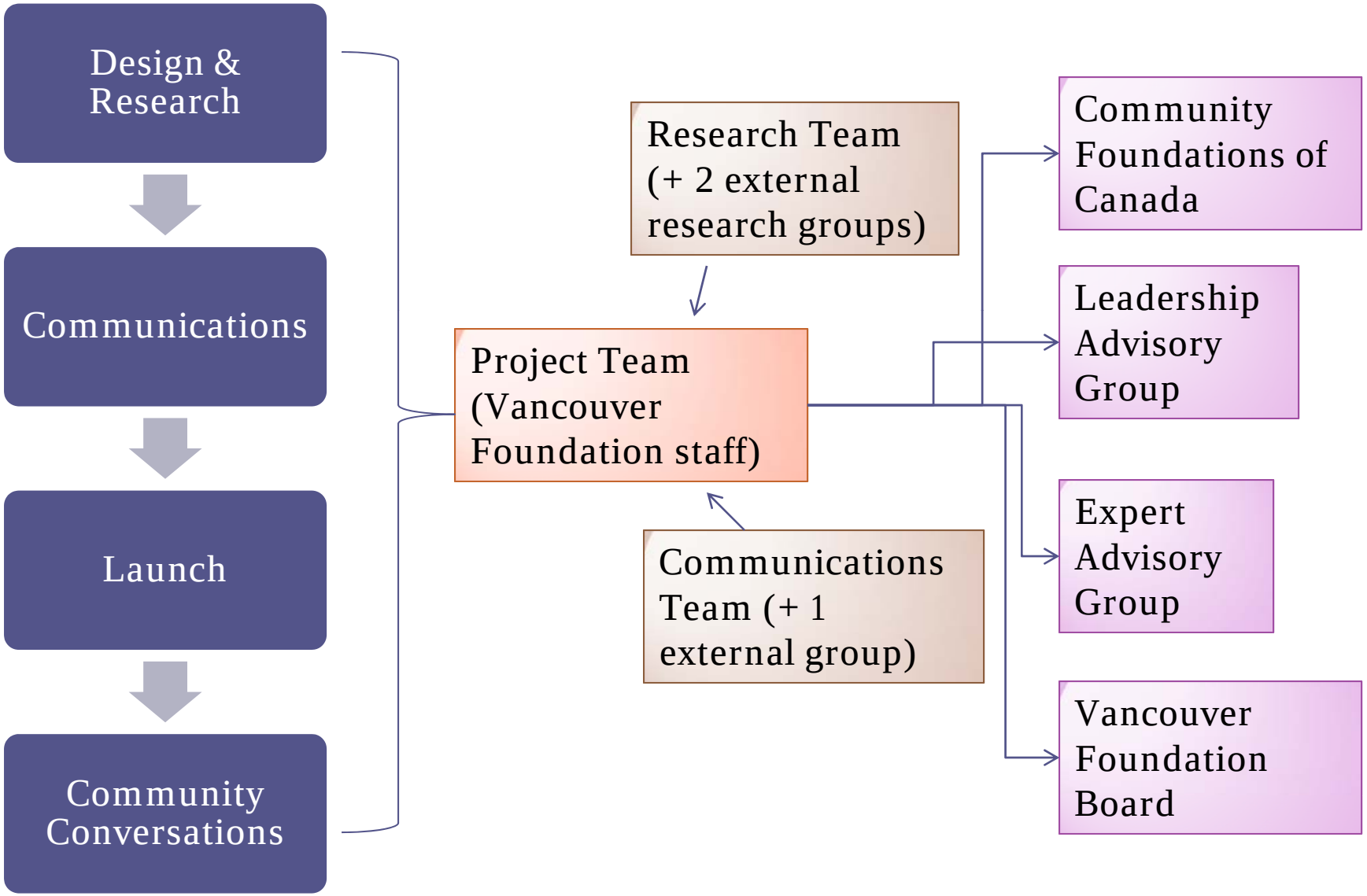
VitalSigns

For Metro Vancouver

EG1.

2010 On the road to vitality

Steps and Organizational Structure



Criteria for Indicator Short Listing

- Makes a strategic contribution to an understanding of regional vitality and/or its challenges (important, balance, connections)
- Potential to demonstrate core progress over time (timely, available, subject to change)
- Normative interpretation is relatively unambiguous (story-telling)
- Attention-grabbing and motivating of change within the realm of possibilities (magic)
- Speaks to conditions across the region as a whole (representative)
- > 10% "stretch" indicators, where a measure would help complete the picture, but we currently lack the data to report

Children and Youth

Life has improved for many of our children and youth, but we need to do more

Children need a good start in life. The more they thrive in school, at home and at play, the greater their chances of becoming happy, successful adults who keep our community strong.

Citizen Grade

C+

Citizen Priorities

More affordable childcare — 19%

Decrease child poverty — 15%

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Children's vulnerability

29%

of kindergarten children struggle to meet desired developmental targets for their age

2009

Food banks

40%

of the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society's clients are estimated to be children – higher than the provincial average of 31%

2009

Fruits and veggies

54%

of our youth don't eat the recommended amount of fruits and veggies, and consume them less frequently than Toronto or Montreal

Physical activity

74%

of youth age 12 to 19 take part in moderate or higher levels of physical activity – our youth exercise more than those in Montreal or Toronto

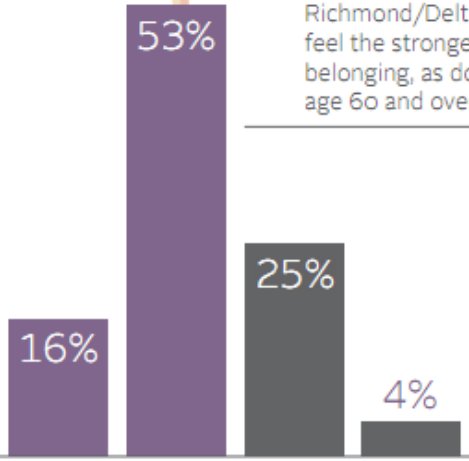
2009

www.vancouverfoundationvitalsigns.ca/wp-content/uploads/public-opinion-poll/regional-comparisons/vitalsignsreport.pdf

How we feel we belong

How would you describe your sense of belonging to your local community?

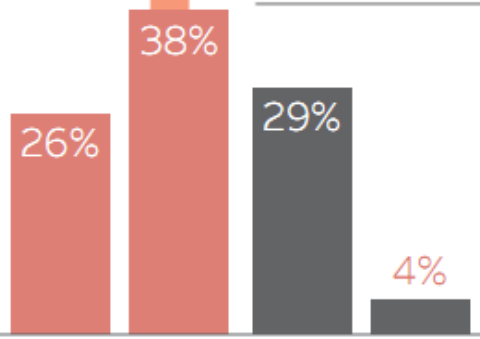
The majority of us feel a very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging, and our belonging grows stronger depending on our age and where we live. Richmond/Delta residents feel the strongest sense of belonging, as do residents age 60 and over.



Our trust in our neighbours

In your neighbourhood, would you say you trust...

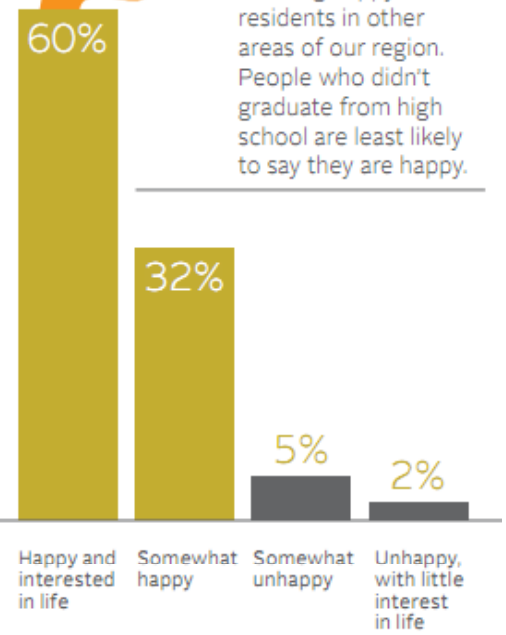
Overall, most people have a bond of trust with their community, but there is a major gap between our youth and seniors. Young residents, age 15 to 29, are least likely to trust their neighbours, while older residents are the most trusting.



Our happiness

How do you usually feel?

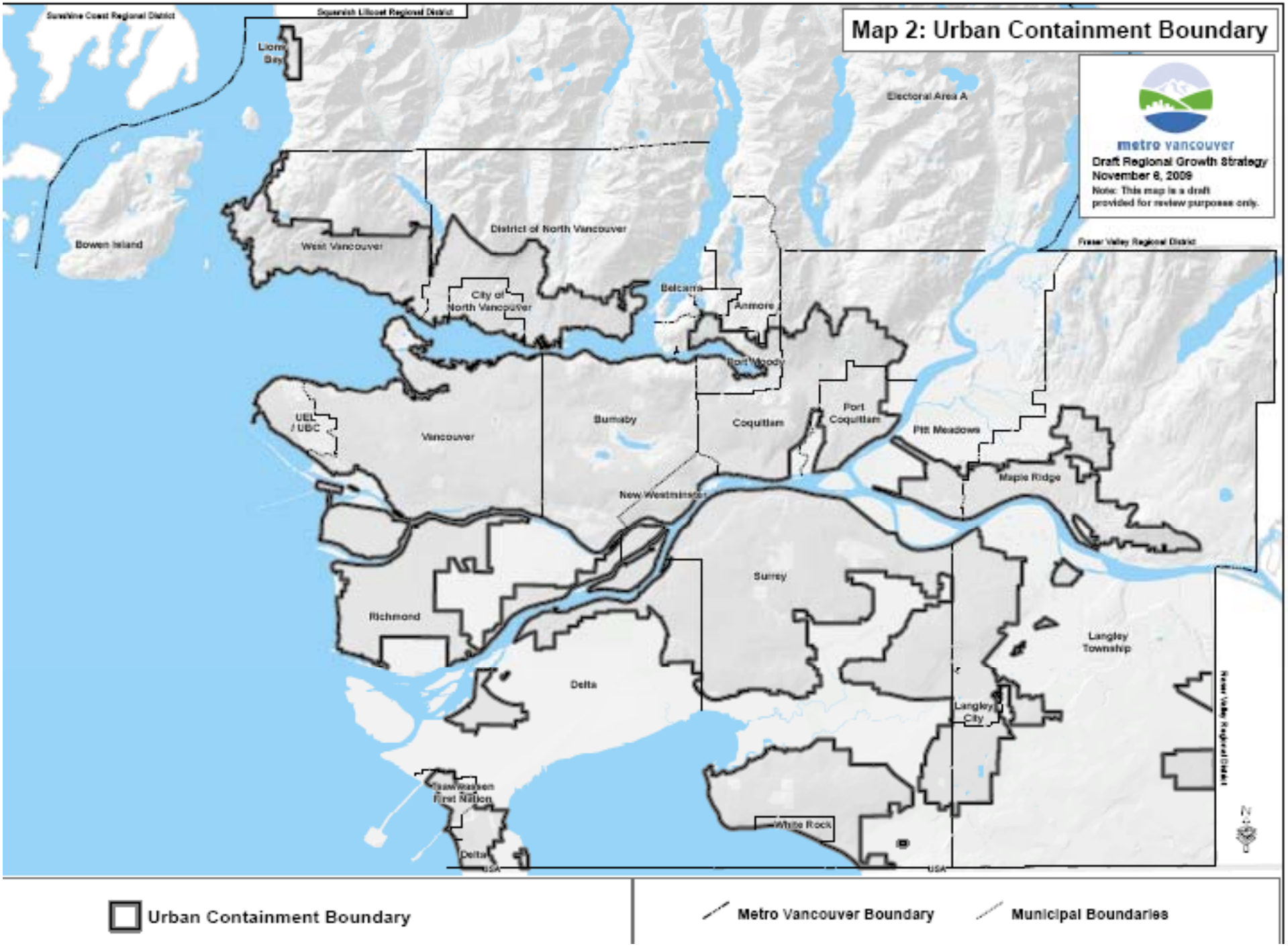
Happiness varies in our region. Our North Shore residents have a higher likelihood of being happy than residents in other areas of our region. People who didn't graduate from high school are least likely to say they are happy.



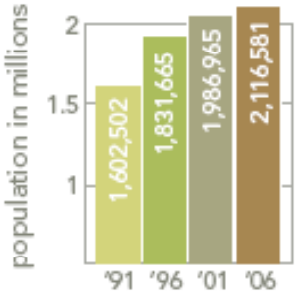
Indicators and reporting in Metro Vancouver

LRSP Monitoring Indicators	• Monitors implementation of regional growth strategy
Sustainability Report	• Tracks corporate level progress annually • Communicate broader trends to the public
Regional Trends	• Demographic and socioeconomic statistics • Updated regularly
Sustainability Summit	• “pictures of success” for the future of the region • “key actions to put these in motion”

EG2.


Map 2: Urban Containment Boundary
metro vancouver
Draft Regional Growth Strategy
November 6, 2009
Note: This map is a draft provided for review purposes only.
Sunshine Coast Regional District
Squamish Lillooet Regional District
Lions Bay
Bowen Island
West Vancouver
District of North Vancouver
City of North Vancouver
Belcarra
Anmore
Port Moody
Electoral Area A
Fraser Valley Regional District
UEL / UBC
Vancouver
Burnaby
Coquitlam
Port Coquitlam
Pitt Meadows
Maple Ridge
New Westminster
Surrey
Richmond
Delta
Langley Township
Langley City
White Rock
Tsawwassen First Nation
USA
Urban Containment Boundary
Metro Vancouver Boundary
Municipal Boundaries

The region's population is growing



POPULATION OF METRO VANCOUVER (1991 TO 2006)

Metro Vancouver's population may be 3.4 million by 2040. Growth has contributed to the economic prosperity of the region but the question arises, and this report examines, the degree to which population growth is affecting the sustainability of the region.

The average number of people in a household has remained the same since 1991: 2.6 people.

Source: Census Canada

People are choosing to move here...

PLACE OF BIRTH OF METRO VANCOUVER RESIDENTS (2006)

...and the result is a vibrant and diverse community

English is the most common language spoken in homes in the region (58%). The next most common is one of the Chinese languages (Cantonese, Mandarin and others) spoken in 15% of the region's homes. More than 70 other languages are spoken by residents of the region.

Source: Census Canada

OVERALL PRE-TAX POVERTY RATES (LICO 1992-base) FOR CANADA, BC, AND METRO VANCOUVER, 1976-2006

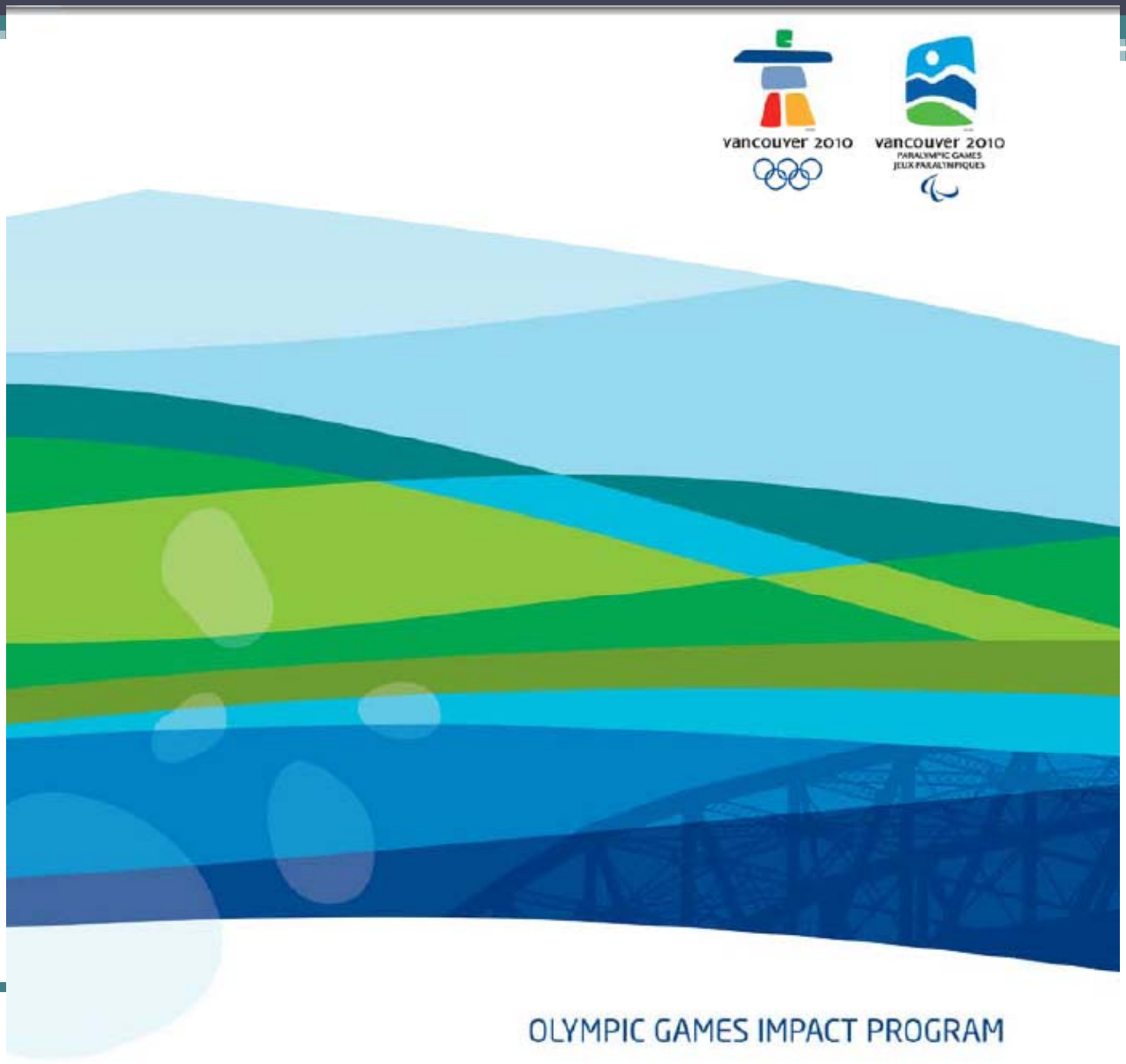
SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA INCOME TRENDS IN CANADA, 1976-2006

The number of homeless people living on the street and in shelters is increasing

HOMELESS POPULATIONS IN SHELTERS OR THE STREET IN METRO VANCOUVER (2002 TO 2008)

Every three years, the homeless people in Metro Vancouver are enumerated, providing a snapshot of the level of homelessness. The 2008 count found that the numbers had increased by 22% from the previous count and 137% from the original count. The static count of the homeless in shelters indicates the marginal increase in shelter space is not sufficient and that more people are either living on the street or relying on informal and temporary accommodations. Among the important findings of the recent count was that the number of homeless people increased in every municipality; almost half of the homeless people had been without a home for one year or more; and almost 100 fully-employed individuals were counted in the emergency shelters.

Source: Greater Vancouver Homeless Count


vancouver 2010
vancouver 2010
PARALYMPIC GAMES
JEUX PARALYMPIQUES
OLYMPIC GAMES IMPACT PROGRAM

EG3.

S-C Bundle 1: Progress in Elite Amateur Sport in Canada

Two indicators comprise this bundle:

- Results at Olympic and Paralympic Games and World Championships; and
- Top-level Sportsmen and Women.

S-C Bundle 2: Health and Physical Activity

Four indicators comprise this bundle:

- Health, which reports on dimensions such as birth, death, and infant mortality rate;
- Nutrition;
- Sport and Physical Activities, (lack of available data); and
- School Sports (lack of available data).

OLYMPIC OVERSIGHT INTERIM REPORT CARD

2010 Olympic Games

May 2007

Grade

The authors have assigned a grade of "D–" to the Parties for their work on realizing the commitment statements based on the findings to date. The authors assigned this grade to recognize that some steps have been taken in some commitment areas, making an "F" grade inappropriate; however, the authors did wish to bring to the attention of the Parties the failure in many areas to even initiate plans or strategies to realize many of the Commitments. The authors also wish to note that if the Parties continue at the current pace in their attempts to realize the Commitment statements, the ultimate grade given to the Parties will be a failing grade. Below is a brief synopsis of the findings and recommendations, forming the basis for the grade.

Vancouver's Emergent Olympic Impact Indicators

- The spirit factor: record use of public space in downtown
- The volunteer factor: 45,000 applicants
- Sustainable transportation record: 61% sustainable mode share
- Facilities and infrastructure: Canada Line, sports facilities, convention centre
- No halo effect: Increased construction employment pre-Olympics, but no impact on housing prices, tourism short-lived

Canadian Index of Wellbeing

http://www.ciw.ca, “unique insights into the quality of life of Canadians”

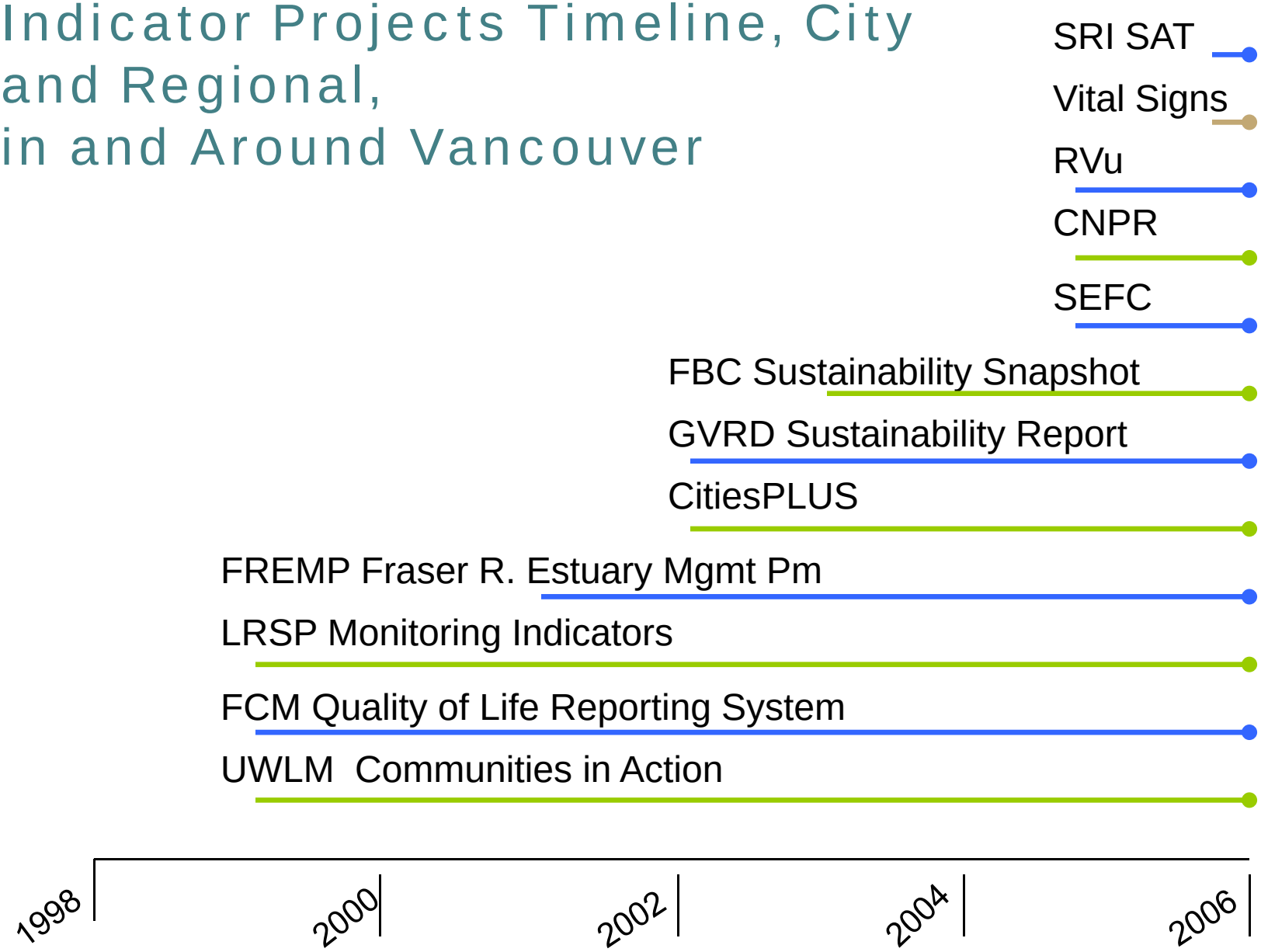
- Community Vitality
- Democratic Engagement
- Education
- Environment
- Healthy Populations
- Leisure & Culture
- Living Standards
- Time Use

Lessons and Warnings

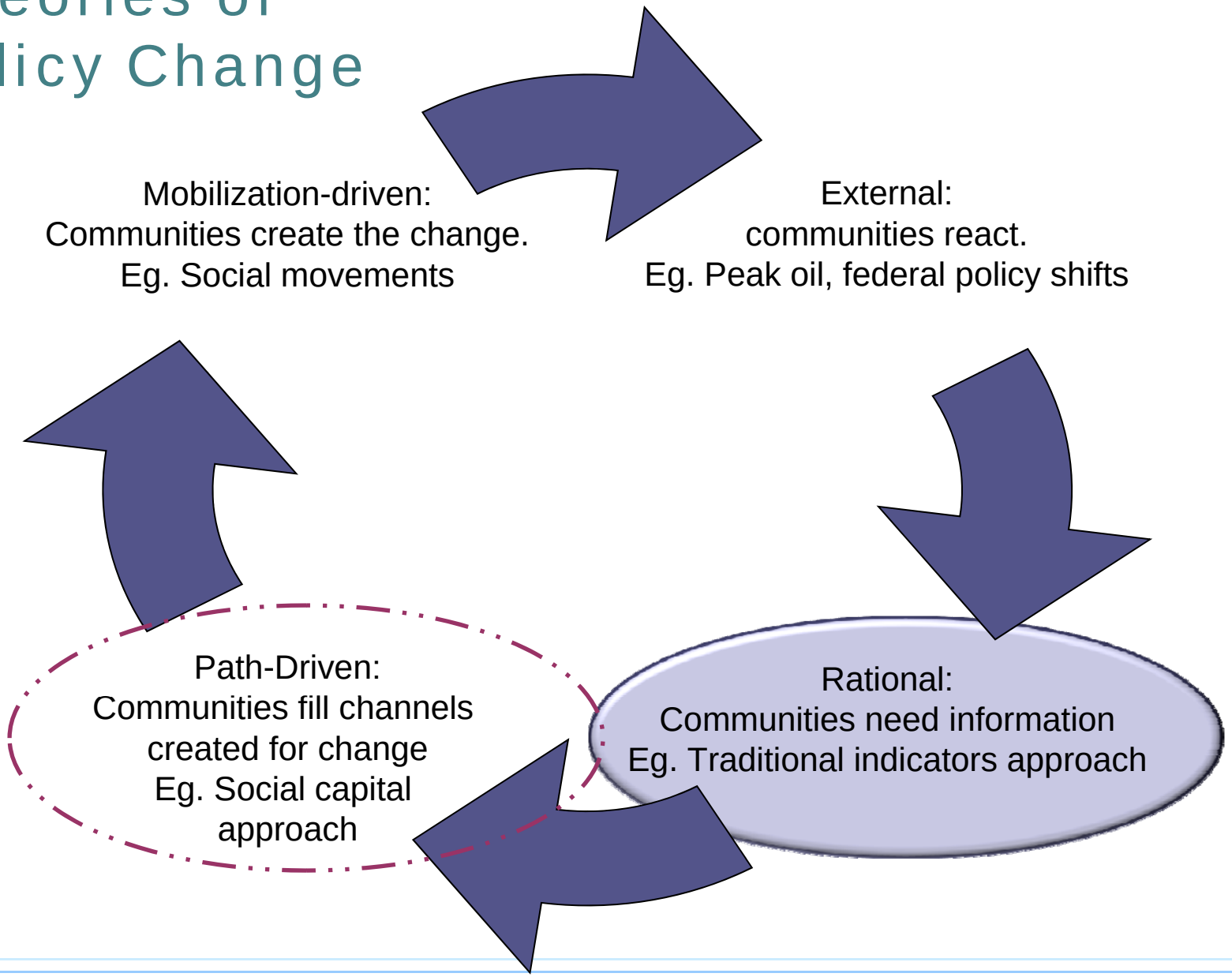
Warnings for the Indicators Movement

- **Most indicators used in decision making serve as 'validators' of existing practice**
- **Internal performance measures are unlikely to drive change or "push the needle out of the groove"**
- **Preoccupation with indicators as accountability devices; too much attention in this direction takes away from the potential role of indicators in change and innovation**
- **Need for better target audience identification for indicators, recognizing that the most important audience must be decision-makers, given the need for indicators to influence policy**

Indicator Projects Timeline, City and Regional, in and Around Vancouver



Theories of Policy Change



Indicators as creating a different path for urban development

- Indicators provide pointed political advice in neutral clothing; they can therefore get in the door of decision-making rooms because they are perceived on the surface as offering only inputs to decisions, not directions
- They can bring a wide range of groups to the table because coming to the table only depends on a commitment to “the facts” not to any particular perception of what the problem is or the best course to the solution
- Engaging in this process of collaboration around indicators can lead to new habits, new trust between different groups, and new willingness to try different approaches

Thank You!
For more information about the
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Photos Credit: John Goldsmith